

Position statement

26 October 2010

Review of directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications

- 1 We are the nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Islands. We exist to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public. We set standards of education, training and conduct for nurses and midwives and hold the register of those who have qualified and meet those standards. We have fair processes to investigate and deal with those whose fitness to practise is called into question.

Background information

- 2 The NMC processes the applications of about 7000 EU nurses and midwives every year under the provisions of directive 2005/36/EC.
- 3 The directive has been a determining factor in increasing the freedom of movement in the EU and the NMC recognises the positive contribution of EU nurses and midwives to the provision of care in the UK.
- 4 However, we must use the opportunity of the directive's revision to enhance patient safety while respecting the rights of migrating professionals.
- 5 EU competent authorities for nursing have agreed to collaborate on discussions around the directive through an informal network. The network was set up in 2010 in order to produce national experience reports and exchange information and best practice. 25 EU member states have been actively involved in the network either online or through meetings. The NMC has initiated and supported the development of this network and has been an active member of the EU network of midwifery regulators.

Recommendations

- 6 The following are NMC recommendations for the review of directive 2005/36/EC. We urge European policy makers to take them into consideration during their debates on the revision of the directive.

david.hubert@nmc-uk.org

23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ
T +44 20 7637 7181 F +44 20 7436 2924
www.nmc-uk.org

The nursing and midwifery regulator for England,
Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Islands
Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)

Minimum training requirements

- 7 The minimum training requirements provided in the directive date back three decades. They need to be updated to recognise that nurses and midwives should be prepared for new roles and broader responsibilities and to mirror scientific and academic progress.
- 8 Nursing and midwifery is gradually moving to a degree level in a large number of European countries following 12 rather than 10 years of secondary study. Any changes to minimum training requirements should reflect this change.
- 9 While nurses and midwives remain professionals that provide direct care to patients and women they are professions that have progressed dramatically over the last two decades. Current nursing and midwifery practice includes leadership, autonomous practice and is evidence-based.

Internal market information (IMI) system

- 10 There is a clear recognition that it is a very good system. Competent authorities agree that it would be very useful to insert an alert mechanism as is the case for the professions of the 'services directive'.

Continuous professional development (CPD)

- 11 CPD should be made a compulsory requirement in the directive. A harmonised definition for it should be established as it would help have a common understanding of the requirement across the EU.

Professional cards

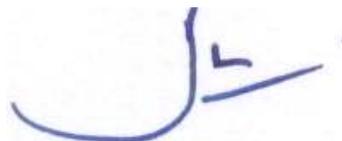
- 12 Professional cards could help streamline the process of registration and facilitate mobility. However, a card should be a uniform system for the whole of the EU and there needs to be complete interoperability between the IT systems of competent authorities. One way of achieving this, rather than creating new systems, would be to link professional cards to the trusted IMI system.

Language competence

- 13 Language competence is a shared responsibility between the nurse or midwife, the regulator and the employer. We would expect all professionals practicing in the UK to have adequate language skills to communicate with their patients, women and colleagues.



Professor Anthony Hazell
Chair



Professor Dickon Weir-Hughes
Chief Executive and Registrar